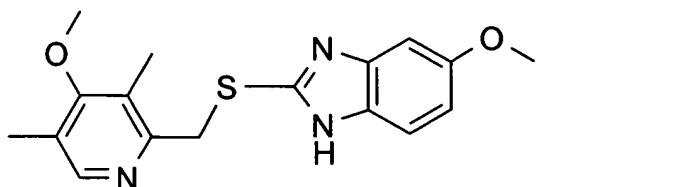


**Amendments to the Claims**

**The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.**

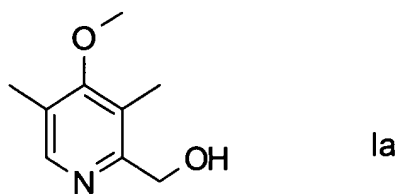
1. (Currently amended) A process for the manufacture of 5-methoxy-2-[[[4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridinyl)-methyl]-thio]-1H-benzimidazole of formula I,



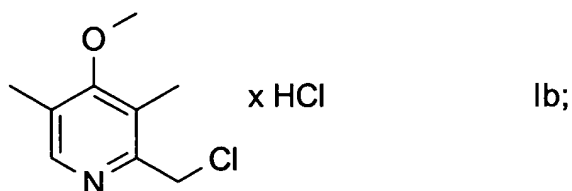
~~[from (4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridinyl)-methyl alcohol]~~ the process comprising the following reaction steps carried out in a consecutive order in ~~[one main]~~ a single solvent system without isolation of the intermediates formed during the process:

[Step 1:]

- a) reacting (4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridinyl)methyl alcohol (pyrmethyl alcohol) of ~~[the]~~ formula Ia,

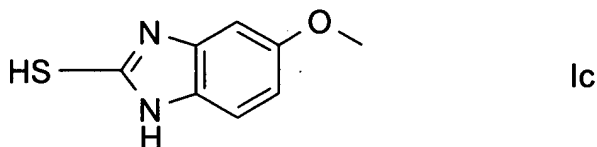


with a chloro-dehydroxylating agent ~~[, providing]~~ to obtain (4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridinyl)methyl chloride (pyrmethyl chloride) of ~~[the]~~ formula Ib; and



[Step 2:]

b) reacting the (4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridinyl)methyl chloride of ~~[the]~~ formula Ib ~~;~~  
~~prepared in Step 1 above,~~ with 2-mercapto-5-methoxybenzimidazole (metmercazole) of ~~[the]~~  
formula Ic,



in the presence of a base ~~[-providing]~~ to obtain 5-methoxy-2-[[~~(4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-~~  
~~pyridinyl)methyl~~]thio]-1H-benzimidazole (pyrmetazole) of ~~[the]~~ formula I, ~~[characterized~~  
~~in that]~~ wherein the solvent system ~~[-common for the whole]~~ is the same for the entire reaction  
sequence, and wherein the solvent system comprises a water-immiscible organic solvent ~~[with]~~  
and an [specified] amount of water in the range of between 0.3 and 5.5 mg water [/] per ml of the  
water-immiscible organic solvent ~~[added]~~.

2. (Currently amended) [A] The process according to claim 1, wherein the water-immiscible organic solvent is toluene.
3. (Currently amended) [A] The process according to claim 1, wherein the water-immiscible organic solvent is ethyl acetate.
4. (Currently amended) [A] The process according to claim 1, ~~[characterized in that]~~ wherein the ~~[specified amount of]~~ water is present ~~[from]~~ at the start of step a) ~~[the reaction according to Step 1]~~.
5. (Currently amended) [A] The process according to ~~[any one of claims 1 and 4, characterized in that]~~ claim 1, wherein the ~~[specified amount of]~~ water is added during ~~[the]~~ charging of the chloro-dehydroxylating agent ~~[in the reaction according to Step 1]~~.

6. (Currently amended) [A] The process according to ~~[any one of claims 1 to 5, characterized in that]~~ claim 1, wherein the ~~[specified amount of]~~ water is added after charging of the chloro-dehydroxylating agent ~~[in the reaction according to Step 1]~~.
7. (Currently amended) [A] The process according to claim 1, ~~[characterized in that]~~ wherein the ~~[specified amount of]~~ water is in the range of 0.3 - 5.0 mg/ml of the water-immiscible organic solvent.
8. (Currently amended) [A] The process according to claim 1, ~~[characterized in that]~~ wherein the ~~[specified amount of]~~ water is in the range of 0.4 - 2.4 mg/ml of the water-immiscible organic solvent.
9. (Currently amended) [A] The process according to claim 1, ~~[characterized in that]~~ wherein the ~~[specified amount of]~~ water is in the range of 1.0 - 2.4 mg/ml of the water immiscible organic solvent.
10. (Currently amended) [A] The process according to ~~[any one of claims 1 to 9, characterized in that]~~ claim 1, wherein the reaction in step a) ~~[according to Step 1]~~ is carried out at a temperature in the range of between -5°C and +45°C.
11. (Currently amended) [A] The process according to ~~[any one of claims 1 to 9, characterized in that]~~ claim 1, wherein the reaction in step a) is carried out at a temperature [is] in the range of between -5°C and +35°C.
12. (Currently amended) [A] The process according to ~~[any one of claims 1 to 9, characterized in that]~~ claim 1, wherein the reaction in step a) is carried out at a temperature [is] in the range of between +10°C and +35°C.

13. (Currently amended) [A] The process according to ~~[any one of claims 1 to 9, characterized in that]~~ claim 1, wherein the reaction in step a) is carried out at a temperature ~~[is]~~ in the range of between +25°C and +35°C.

14. (Currently amended) [A] The process according to ~~[any one of claims 1 to 13,]~~ claim 1, wherein ~~[characterized in that]~~ the chloro-dehydroxylating agent is thionyl chloride.

15. (New) The process according to claim 1, further comprising adding an additional amount of water to the water-immiscible organic solvent during step a) after the start of the reaction.

16. (New) The process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction in step b) is carried out at a temperature in the range of between +30°C and +60°C.

17. (New) The compound 5-methoxy-2-[[(4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridinyl)methylthio]-1H-benzimidazole (pyrmetazole) prepared according to any one of claims 1 to 16.